

A Relation of some of the most material Matters that passed in a Publick Dispute at Thriploe in Cambridge-shire the 15th day of the 2d Month 1676. between Francis Holdcraft, and Joseph Odde his Assistant, both Presbyterian Priests, on the one Party, and Samuel Cater, with some others of the Friends of Truth called Quakers.

I The aforesaid Samuel; being at a Meeting of our Friends in that Country, where there were some told me of the Lyes, Slanders, and Reproaches that were frequently vented and cast upon us the people of God, called *Quakers*, by this above-named *Francis Holdcraft*, and his Abettor *Joseph Odde*, (that is to say) that the *Quakers* are deceivers, and that they did not believe in the True Christ the *Messiah* and Saviour of the World, and that they Preached another Jesus, and not the True Jesus, and that they were Antechrists; and of this they made their boast, that they would prove the same to any of our Faces, if we would or durst come to that Town; upon the hearing of which, for the Truth sake, for which the Lord hath called me to bear Testimony thereunto, and for the clearing of the Innocency of those that believe therein, and are led and guided thereby, which I knew they had most grossly abused, I was made free in the fear of the Lord to appoint a Meeting at that Town of *Thriploe*, and give notice of it seven days before; in which time I desired that the Persons above-named might have timely notice of it; which was done, that so they might prove that to our faces if they could, which they had said of us behind our backs, or receive reproofs for their unfruitful works of darkness. So when I with some Friends were come to the Town, and were at a Friends house, there was word brought to us, that *F.H.* was come to Town also, and that he thought it not so convenient to come to our publick Meeting, but rather desired to speak with three or four of us more privately to discourse out the matters in Controversie between us; then I sent him word; that he had reviled us, and our Principles openly, and I did expect that he should come as openly, as he had promised, to prove what he had said against us, or else to receive shame for his works; and the time of day was now come to go to the place

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*By Samuel Cater, John Webb and
Jacob Babb.*

which was appointed for the Meeting, where we did intend to go, and desired that he might meet us there; but if they would not come to us, then we were resolved to come to them after the Meeting; and we being gathered together, and waiting upon the Lord some time before they came, there was a Friend declaring the Truth to the people; when *F. H.* came to the door, and said, That if he would not hold his peace, he would not come in; but the Friend having freedom, he did soon leave, and then he came in: I stood up and spake a few words unto the people by way of Exhortation, That all might be sober and weighty in their minds, that so they might be the better prepared to give a right Judgment of what might pass between us: — Then *F. H.* said, If I would not hold my Tongue, he would be gone.

John Webb Answered, Be patient a little & hear, and if we speak any thing contrary to Truth, thou mayst judge us out of our own Mouths.

Francis Holdcraft. I will have no patience.

Samuel Cater. Then thou art unfit to be a Minister of Christ; but however *F. H.* I would not have thee go away yet, for we do expect that thou shouldst perform what thou hast promised, if thou canst; that is, to prove us deceivers, and thou hast said we deny the True Christ, and that we Preach a false, and not the *Messiah* the Saviour of the World; and this is the business thou hast promised to do.

F. H. And this I shall do by the help of Almighty God.

F. H. Is your name *Samuel Cater*, and are you a *Quaker*?

S. C. My name is so, and I own, and have unity with all the honest and upright-hearted people of God, called *Quakers*.

F. H. But do you own the *Quakers* Principles? let me know that, that I may have a foundation to stand upon in our Discourse.

S. C. What Principle is it that thou art against that we hold, Repeat it, and I shall give thee an Answer?

F. H. Do you own the *Quakers* Principles.

J. B. Another Friend standing by said, there is a Book of ours called *Trunks Principles* any one therein contained we will own, in instance which you will.

S. C. As to answer to thee in short, that I own all that are published as the *Quakers* Principles I shall not do; for this reason: there are envious and evil-minded men have forged Principles, and called them the *Quakers* to abuse us, and to present us, and our Principles odious;

odious; and therefore seeing thou wilt not tell us what Principle of ours thou art against, I shall here declare the universal Principle, that I with the rest of my Brethren own, and turn people unto; that is, *Jesus Christ is the True Light, that Lighteth every man that cometh into the World, and that so many as love this Light, and bring their deeds unto it, and are led and guided by it, are saved; and all that disobey it, are condemned by it.* This is our Principle, What sayst thou to it?

F. H. I say to affirm that every one is enlightened with the Light of Christ, is Cursed Idolatry.

S. C. Then I say *Francis*, the Pit that thou hast digged for the *Quakers*, thou art fallen into thy self this day in the sight of all that have an Eye to see, and an Ear to hear; for I'll prove by the Scriptures of Truth, that this Lord Jesus Christ, *that Lighteth every Man that comes into the World, is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the World: See John 1 7, 8, 9. & 8. 12. & 29.*

F. H. That every one is enlightened, I grant; but not with the Light of Christ.

S. C. What is it then that they are enlightened with?

F. H. A Creature.

S. C. What kind of Creature is it, a Man or a Beast? but in this he answered nothing, and in this as well as many other things he was manifest to be in great Confusion, and in his Knowledge to be more brutish than a Beast, to call that a Creature; which the Scriptures of Truth calls the Life of God, and says it is *the Light of Men: Read John 1. 1, 2, 3, 4.*

F. H. I will prove that the *Quakers* deny the Man Christ Jesus, who is now at the Right Hand of his Father in the Highest Heaven, and hold forth another Christ, another Gospel, another Spirit.

S. C. Well, go on and do it if thou canst, we ask no favour at thy hand. By this time his Brother *Joseph Odde* came in, the other Priest, saying to him in a fawning flattering manner, Sir, I am glad to see you here this day about so good a work as this is; but to me and the rest of my Friends he spake revilingly, and told us we were a Generation of Vipers, and that they would prove us so to be before they went from thence.

F. H. Do you own the Man Christ Jesus, body flesh and bone, to be at the Right Hand of his Father in the Highest Heaven, yonder, yonder above the Stars, pointing upward with his Hands and Eyes.

S. C. The True Christ I own, and believe in the same that the Prophet prophesied of, and the Apostles Preached Salvation in his name, and am ready to render a reason of the hope that is in me, when it is my place so to do; but *Francis* it is not thy business to Catechise me at this time; but to prove that we deny the True Christ; this thou hast promised to do, and I expect thou shouldst do it, or else acknowledge thy error.

F. H. I said as much, you dare not own the True Christ, if you do say you do.

J. O. There, hold him there.

S. C. The True Christ I own, but thy Carnal Imaginations of him I deny; but this I say, we are upon the defensive part; thou hast said we deny Christ, it is on thy part to prove it.

F. H. Urged the like question again; but never took in hand, nor went about to prove what he had promised.

S. C. To the people I am not ashamed, nor afraid to confess my Faith and belief concerning Jesus Christ, as this man would suggest into our minds, and make you believe; but the reason yet why I have not done it is, because it's not my business at this time; we are accused by this man to deny Christ, and he saith he will prove it, it is his place so to do if he can; and his asking me whether I own Christ, implies as much as this, that he does not know whether we own him, or deny him; so that he hath done unjustly by us, and unwisely by himself, in going to report that we deny the True Christ, behind our backs; and now we call him in question before our faces: Instead of proving of it, he asks us whether we own him or deny him; which question would have been more seasonable, and more honest, to have been asked us before he had thus openly reproached us, and slandered us; for it appears he hath said that of us, which he cannot prove; and therefore must return again upon himself, as the raiser, or at least maintainer of these false reports; and he must, till he can clear himself of these lyes and slanders, which he so frequently vends out of his mouth, and casts upon the Innocent, be numbred amongst the Liers for the Lake, who are in the Steps which the Prophet speaks of; report, and we will report it.

F. H. Still balled and call'd out, whether I owned the True Christ.

S. C. For the sake of the people that are here, I do say, that the same Lord Jesus Christ which the Scriptures Testifie of, I believe in, and expect Salvation by, and in no other, that is to say, the Christ
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of God that was born of the Virgin *Mary*, and was Crucified by the High-Priests, and envious ones, and was raised by the power of God, and Ascended far above all Heavens, and is at the Right Hand of God; and is also knocking at every ones door for an entrance into their Hearts, that he might dwell in and amongst them.

F. H. Then cryed out to the people, this is a Cheat, this is to blind the people.

S. C. How is it a Cheat, I speak as I do believe, and my words are according to the Scripture?

F. H. You do not believe as you say.

S. C. How dost thou know I do not believe as I say?

F. H. I can prove out of the *Quakers* Books, that you do not believe as you say.

S. C. Shew us that Book of ours, that says we deny the True Christ:

But none he could shew us.

S. C. I say again, the same Jesus in whose name the Lame Man was made whole, that *Peter* and *John* bare Testimony to, (before them that Crucified him) in the name of *Jesus Christ* of *Nazareth*, doth this man stand before you whole this day; *This is the Stone, that is set at naught by you Builders, and is now become the head of the Corner*: I say, in this Christ, I with the rest of my Brethren believe, and hope for Salvation, and in no other name or thing whosoever.

Then there was one called to us, that we might have some discourse concerning Election and Reprobation; for these Men had declared before the people, that some Children were in a state of Damnation before they were born; about which some people were dissatisfied that heard them.

Then *Joseph Odde* desired to take the matter in hand.

J. O. spake to this purpose, you do not understand neither the righteousness, nor the sin as it is in Gods account.

S. C. Wherein do we not understand?

J. O. Do you not acknowledge that all men fell in *Adam*.

S. C. I do acknowledge according to the Scriptures, in *Adam* all sinned; which was and is the fall from God.

J. O. This *Adam* represents all men, so that in him all are included, as if there were but one in all.

S. C. The Apostle says, *As was the offence, so also was the free gift; and as in Adam all dyed, so in Christ all comes to be made alive again*, Rom. 5. 18.

J. O. All

J. O. All fell in *Adam*, and you have granted that all sinned in him; and therefore Children while they are in the Womb, before they are born, so soon as they have life, and are a Living Soul, they are guilty of Original sin, and are Vessels of Wrath, and for destruction.

S. C. I'll prove this to be false Doctrine; and contrary to the mind and will of God revealed in the Scriptures of Truth; for the Lord said by the Prophet *Ezekiel* 18. Read from the beginning onward, that *Proverb* shall not be used in Israel, saying, *the Fathers have eaten sower Grapes, and the Childrens Teeth are set on edge; but as the Soul of the Father is mine, the Soul of the Son is mine also; the same Soul that sins shall die.* Jer. 13. 30.

J. O. But death Reigned from *Adam* to *Moses*, will you not grant that?

S. C. Yes, over them that had sinned; and therefore thou must prove Children to be sinners before they are born, (which thou and all thy Brethren can never do) or else thou canst not prove them damned.

J. O. Death Reigned from *Adam* to *Moses* over all men, and I will prove a Child a Man before it is born; and therefore guilty of sin before it is born.

S. C. Prove that if thou canst; People I desire you all to be still, and let us hear how *Joseph Odde* will prove a Child a Man before it is born, by plain Scripture, for no other proof we will accept of.

J. O. Christ says, *A Woman bath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she is delivered, she remembers no more her pain, for joy that a Man is born into the World.*

S. C. This is no proof; for Christ does not say that it was a Man before it was born.

F. H. Children are sinners before they are born; for *David* says, *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin hath my Mother Conceived me.*

S. C. Whether was the sin in the Mother, or in the Child? for Christ speaks of the state of a little Child to be happy, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven; and you say some Children are for Hell and Destruction, which is a damnable Doctrine, and altogether contrary to the Scriptures, and to the mind of God revealed therein; which says, God would have all to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth; and therefore made none for destruction, but Mans destruction is of himself, for want of receiving and obeying of Christ, the Son of his Love, who is come a Light into the World, that all Men through him might believe, John 1. 7.

F. H. There

F. H. There is none shall be saved but such as are elected.

S. C. You are strangers to that election, which hold, that God hath made one man for Salvation, and another for destruction, as they are the Workmanship of his own Hands; But *Francis*, I ask thee this question, Whether thou thy self be one of these elect thou speakest of?

F. H. Yes I am.

S. C. And how camest thou to be so?

F. H. By the free Grace of God.

S. C. And doth not this same Grace appear unto all men, for the saving and electing of all, as it doth unto thee?

F. H. No, I deny that.

S. C. I'll prove by the Scripture, that it does, People look in your Bibles, and look into *Titus* 2. 11. and you may read it as I say.

F. H. I will Read it my self.

S. C. Do so,

F. H. Read thus, *The Grace of God that brought Salvation, hath appeared unto Men.*

S. C. Thou Readst wrong, and takes from the Scriptnre, thou leavest out the word *All*, Read it as it is in thy own Book.

F. H. I Read it as it is in the *Greek*; for it is not so in the *Greek*, as it is in our Books.

An indifferent person standing by called unto him, and told him, *Francis* what do you bring your Bible hither for, if it be wrong translated.

S. C. We have no reason to go from the plain words of Scripture to believe thee; for we believe the Scripture speaks as true in this as in any other things that it declares of; and further, we understand the things of God in the Language in which we were born, and we would not be so shuffled off, or baffled out of our belief of the truth of the Scriptures, to believe what thou or any man says, who say they are not true; and I told him then, I believed he did say that which was not true of the *Greek* Copies; and as I then said, so I have since found it to be; for since I desired some that understood the *Greek* and *Latine* Tongues, and the word *All Men*, which he would not read, and impudently said it was not in the *Greek*, which you may here read, *Apparuit enim gratia Dei saluatoris nostri omnibus hominibus*, Ενεφανη δὲ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ σωτηρία πάντων ἀνθρώπων; Whereby all men may see this mans deceit, who makes lyes his refuge,
and

and under falshood hides himself, but in the light he is seen, and by the Children of the light made manifest, and his unfruitful works of darkness detected, and his Religion seen to be vain, who does not bridle his Tongue from lying, and slandering of the Innocent; which is known to have been his practice these several years, and yet so continues, whereby he renders evil towards us for good, who suffered him to shelter himself under us to get out of prison.

F. H. Pretended to shake the dust off his feet, and went his way.

S. C. Deceit, if thou goest away, remember that thou hast not yet proved that we are such as thou hast said we are, and I warn thee to cease from railing against us any more; and this further I have to offer thee, and *Joseph Odde*, I would have you both sit down and hear; for I have something upon me to declare to the people; and I shall open my heart freely before you and them, and speak, as to the things we have been speaking of; and if I speak any thing contrary to Scripture, you shall have your liberty by the Scripture to reprove me; but they hastened away with railing words in their mouths; and we continued some time together, in which I cleared my Conscience to all that were there present; and then we parted to our places in peace, having committed our Testimony unto the Witness of God in every ones Conscience, which is the equal measure of what was said and done that day.

And thus we have given an account in part of that days proceedings, for the satisfying of all that desire to know the Truth of the matter, for the stopping of all false reports which envious persons may spread abroad; the which we hear these men are not wanting in, otherwise we could have been contented to have been silent, and to have left it without further publication to the Witness of God, in the Consciences of those who heard us that day, who are Friends to all men; and in that we generally desire their Everlasting Peace and Rest with God, in the Kingdom of his Dear Son.

S. Cater, J. Webb, J. B.

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